

LOG OF TELEPHONE CALL

PERSON CALLED: Bill Trott, Department of Trade and Industry, Great Britain

CALLERS: *James Hoebel* Jim Hoebel and Rikki Khanna, Engineering Sciences

DATE: December 10, 1996

SUBJECT: Upholstered Furniture and Fire Safety Devices

SUMMARY: The most frequent method to construct furniture to meet the UK open flame flammability requirements is the use of backcoated upholstery fabrics. This approach also helps provide cigarette ignition resistance. It does slightly affect the "handling" of the fabric. The largest backcoating firm is *Mydrin*. He recommended that we contact them directly for further technical and business information (011 44 122 672 3661). One widely used formulation uses an acrylic polymer compounded with antimony trioxide flame retardant. CPSC is interested in obtaining some samples of current production backcoated fabrics to evaluate in our laboratory.

Other construction methods include a) use of a schedule 3 interliner--"natural" fabrics can then be used, b) naturally FR modacrylic fabrics, although this is somewhat expensive, and c) cellulose treated with either Pyrovatex or Proban flame retardant.

Other recommended contacts include: Dr. Keith Paul, a very experienced fire engineer in this field (011 44 193 925 0383), David Buszard of the FMC company in Manchester (011 44 1161 872 2323), Colin Smith of a textile finishing trade organization (011 44 161 832 9279), and Reg Hurdes, of a fillings trade association (011 44 177 355 0563).

With regard to fire safety devices, the use of fire blankets is quite common in the UK. They even have a standard for this product: Trott will try to obtain a copy for us. He was not aware of any use of smoke masks in the UK.

The use of fire retardants is quite common in the UK, but other European Union countries have an aversion to their use. The UK plans to do work to assess the risk associated with the use of FR chemicals, including study of mechanisms and toxicity (both ecotoxicity and combustion). They plan to visit the U.S. in March, 1997, and would like to drop by the CPSC to talk to us about this subject.

Distribution: Upholstered Furniture Team via Dale Ray
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